Tells the Facts and Names the Names

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Our Little Secrets

DC's Best Political Mind?

Cal Thomas, the heavily syndicated salesman for the Moral Majority, recently called Paul Weyrich "one of the best political minds in Washington" and asked him what the GOP should focus on in upcoming elections. The finely honed political mind of Weyrich duly disgorged the following as looming issues: immigration, homosexuals in the Boy Scouts, the Pledge.

The Salt Lake City Tribune, which carried Thomas's foolish column, later ran a letter-to-the-editor: "The only consistency I can find in these issues is 1. They are asinine; 2. They are divisive; 3. They are easy to present to a fourth grader." The writer went on to list real issues, like the proposed war with Iraq, corporate corruption, campaign finance reform, etc. hoping that issues that make a difference will actually be debated by candidates. He ended with "Oh no...I just had a thought. What if Cal Thomas is right and Paul Weyrich is one of the best political minds in Washington?"

DC's Most Dangerous?

At 2.40 PM, September 11, 2001, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld was commanding his aides to get "best info fast. Judge whether good enough hit S.H." - meaning Saddam Hussein - "at same time. Not only UBL" - the initials used to identify Osama bin Laden. "Go massive." Notes taken by these aides quote him

*(**OLS** continued on page 2)*

Sorry, W! *Wrong Guy*

Who doomed the presidency of George Bush Sr and sent him limping back to Houston after only one term? It wasn't Saddam Hussein, on on whom Jr now hopes to inflict revenge. It was Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve and the man whose wrong-way calls on interest rates at the start of the Nineties ushered in the recession that doomed Bush Sr.

Guess what? It's happening again! Bush Jr will learn that you can step in the same river twice, so long as Greenspan is controlling the sluices. Because Greenspan did nothing in the late Nineties to curb the greatest corporate crime spree in the history of capitalism, the Democrats got out of Dodge seconds before the roof finally fell in.

As one economist recently remarked, in terms of economic reality, the late Nineties never happened. Everything was done with smoke, mirrors, and crooked accountancy, condoned by Greenspan.

And now the economic horizon is darker by far than you'd ever guess from the pundits. Sure, we've had the implosion of the telecoms, the humiliation of the mightiest names of the Bubble years, World.Com, Enron, Qwest, but the problems run far deeper than the chasm between "pro forma" balance sheets issued to lure investors and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, used for later filings with the SEC.

Admittedly, this chasm was pretty impressive. For the first three quarters of 2001 the Nasdaq 100 companies reported, on a "pro forma" basis, profits of $19 billion. For the very same period these companies reported to the SEC, on a GAAP basis, losses of $82 billion.

But the telecom/high tech bust lurches on against the backdrop of U.S. economy already bloated with overcapacity and over production in international manufacturing. Between their 1997 peak and the first quarter of 2002, manufacturing profits fell by no less than 65 per cent. According to revised government stats the picture in the non manufacturing sector is a good deal darker than had been supposed.

Here's the bottom line. The official rate of profit on capital stock in the non-financial corporate sector as a whole is now (first quarter 2002) at its lowest level in the postwar period, 1980 and 1982 excepted. Remember, as Robert Brenner has been pointing out (see his invaluable The Boom and the Bubble, published by Verso) between 1997 and 2000, at the very same time as the supposed US economic miracle was reaching its point of maximum distension, corporate profits in absolute terms and the rate of return on capital stock (plant, equipment, and software) in the non-financial corporate economy were falling sharply, as recently revised figures show, by 15-20 per cent.

We've now seen seven straight quarters of declining investment on plant and equipment and a sharp drop of the growth of consumer spending over the past four or five months. Suppose there's another drop in equity prices. If we suppose that, we could be looking at a much fiercer recession.

Of course both parties connived in dismantling the regulatory structure installed in the Roosevelt era. It was the Democrats who put through telecommunications "reform" in 1996, which pumped gas into the expanding bubble which Alan Greenspan and the Fed, as well as the SEC, did nothing to puncture. To the contrary, they carefully ignored the mounting corporate frauds that we now know were helping to sustain that bubble. They condoned the stock market frenzy.

If W really wants to settle accounts with the nemesis of his dad and himself, he'll spare Baghdad and bomb the Fed. CP

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Our Little Secrets

as saying. "Sweep it all up. Things related and not."

This was our Donald, thinking fast as he paced about the National Military Command Center, seeking to turn the attack into a rationale for all sort of unrelated revenges and settlings of accounts. The Defense Secretary is currently trying to get the Pentagon greater authority to carry out covert ops. He also wants Congress to agree to have a new under-secretary of defense, responsible for all intelligence matters.

Now blend these proposals in with the erosions of the Posse Comitatus Act, which forbids the US military to have any role in domestic law enforcement. Shake the blender vigorously and you have the Rumsfeld cocktail, with an Ashcroft cherry. A defense under-secretary may soon be able to target YOU, (or the anti-war couple in the apartment next door), bug your phone and computer, burglarize the place, grab you, stick you in prison and let you rot.

All legally. That's what we call military government, the model we impart to Latin American officers mustered for training at the School of the Americas in Fort Benning to install in their countries, along with instruction in torture. And talking of torture...

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Guess Why Dershowitz Wants Clean Needles

In his book Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Dershowitz, currently a visiting professor at UC Berkeley, repeats his well-known call for "torture warrants", along with collective punishment and national ID cards. Dershowitz has long been a fan of torture in Israel, along with the bulldozing of Palestinian homes. What's good for Israel is good for Uncle Sam. The Dershowitz plan: Judges should be empowered by Congress to issue "torture warrants". After the "torture warrant" has been signed, the professor writes, the suspect would be "subjected to judicially monitored physical measures designed to cause excruciating pain without leaving any lasting damage".

One form of torture recommended by Dershowitz: "the sterilized needle being shoved under the fingernails."

Sterilized. That's the bit we like. You can count on a Harvard Law School man to be refined and insist on clean needles.

Battle Terrorism, Go to Prison. It's The Law

Back to Fort Benning. On September 10, 2002, 23 people who committed the crime of demonstrating against the terror methods imparted in Fort Benning reported to federal prison convicted of trespass, with sentences ranging from six months probation to six months in federal prison and $5,000 in fines. Judge G. Mallon Faircloth is notorious for giving the maximum sentence for a misdemeanor to nonviolent opponents of the School of the Americas.

Seventy-one people, School of the Americas Watch tells us, have served a total of over forty years in prison for engaging in nonviolent resistance in the long campaign to close the school. Last year Dorothy Hennessey, an 88 year-old Franciscan nun, was sentenced to six months in federal prison. "It's ironic," Sister Hennessey says. "that at a time when the country is reflecting on how terrorism has impacted our lives, dedicated people who took direct action to stop terrorism throughout the Americas are on their way into prison."

Lese Majeste: That's Against the Law Too

Bush faced around a thousand protesters in Portland, Oregon, when he came in August to lobby on behalf of the timber industry. The riot police came too and the protesters were gassed, sprayed and shot with plastic bullets. These days any public demonstration against the commander in chief is taken as lese majeste. Look at those kids in Ohio a couple of months ago when Bush came to speak at a commencement. They were told that if they shouted anything obstreperous or otherwise displayed themselves in a critical posture, they would not be allowed to graduate.

Kevin O'Neill had a good column recently in the Pittsburgh Post Gazette describing what happened when demonstrators against President Bush were herded inside a fence at Neville Island for his Labor Day visit.

"Police called this enclosure the designated free-speech area, though anyone who had signs praising the president was evidently OK to line the island's main street for the motorcade.

"The mini-Guantanamo on the Ohio was set up strictly for security reasons, of course. Those who pose a genuine threat to the president are expected to carry signs identifying themselves as such, as a courtesy. Hence the erection of the Not-OK Corral.

"Bill Neel of Butler just doesn't get it, though. He's 65 and can remember a time when our entire country was a free-speech zone. So when he refused to get inside the fence with his sign, he was arrested, cuffed and detained in the best place for inflammatory rhetoric, the fire hall.

"Neel's confiscated sign said, 'The Bushes must truly love the poor — they've made so many of us.' For holding this contrary opinion in the censored speech zone, Neel was given a summons for disorderly conduct."

Greatest Endorsement AAA Will Ever Get

"My story", so CounterPuncher Christine TenBarge writes to us, "has to do with a very dear friend in Austin who recently drove her sister to some enormous Afri-

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can American conference ('church event') in Atlanta, near the MLK memorial. Her sister is terrified of flying, and doesn't go many places, so Toni drove the 14 long hours, with some trepidation, there and back. While her sister was at the conference, Toni had lunch with a young woman, Shannen, from Austin who goes to Spelman College and works for the National Parks Service which administers MLK. Shannen gave Toni a tour, but hesitated at the latest exhibit on display. The exhibit is a collection of photos and narratives about the lynching of African Americans in the South from the close of the Civil War to about 1968, a span in which a recorded 4,700 African Americans died of lynching (there were more, of course, the unrecorded).

"For Toni and Shannen, both African American, the exhibit is heartbreaking and horrifying. What surprised and repulsed Toni the most were the photos of African American women and children who also were lynched during that time, usually with a crowd of white onlookers, their own small children in tow. She didn't know about the women and children, although her sister, who is about 20 years older (60s) knew this was done.

"That evening after visiting the memorial, she and her sister started the long drive back to Austin. On the way, though, they stopped at some army base near Atlanta to visit a niece in service. This took some time and finally they were on their way to Austin, by way of backroads instead of main highways, because it would be quicker, they were assured by the niece. Toni says to me, 'Now, I want you to picture us driving those back, back road thru Mississippi and Louisiana, two black women, in the dead of the night, thinking about that exhibit and those photos...it was scary. But the scariest part was the tire exploding. Not blowing out, but exploding, somewhere in Louisiana. Toni's sister was terrified and told her not to get out of the car, not to wave down anyone...she was sure they were going to be dragged from their car, sure they would die.

"Toni confessed that she, too, was worried. Toni is a very self-assured, woman, dynamic, commanding, respected, doctoral candidate, but here she is, stuck in backwoods Louisiana with a blown out tire. Now, (here's the good part) this summer you CounterPunch editors encouraged me to get AAA, even though I have this brand new car and didn't feel the need, but you made good arguments and I was convinced. I, in turn, told Toni that she really should have AAA because her car is older, she is a woman on the move, and it was really a very good investment, what with all the perks that come with membership.

"She took my advice, and when she called AAA in that dead of night, a man came right out and took care of the tire. After Toni and her sister's effusive apologies and thanks for dragging him out of bed at that hour, he told them he didn't mind at all having to get up and help out people who really needed help. What he resented was having to go change the tire of some yuppie, Yankee guy with a fancy car who just didn't want to get his hands dirty."

Editor's note: Back roads from Atlanta? We'll bet Toni and her sister headed west from Natchez, through Alexandria to Leesville, not far from the Texas line. That's unless they understandably wanted to keep clear of Jasper, Texas, where three whites dragged a black man to his death behind their pickup not too long ago. Last April on highway 8 west of Leesville Cockburn was ambushed by State Trooper Curtis Parker, clad in full SWAT gear. In west central Louisiana standard night-time operating procedure for speeding citations (an alleged 72 mph) was to have Cockburn stand behind his 85 Escort diesel wagon, hands away from his sides, in the glare of Parker's headlights, while the trooper ran his driving license.

Toni's sister was terrified and told her not to get out of the car. She was sure they were going to be dragged from their car, sure they would die.

MERLE HAGGARD ON CIVIL LIBERTIES

They still refer to George Bush's popularity. We don't think so. The dwindling number of folk who tell the pollsters they think he's doing a good job are probably worried they'll get investigated by Ashcroft if they don't.

Cheryl Burns reports this from Kansas City: "I saw Merle Haggard tonight in KC—great show. He said something about 'so now we're in another war' and went on to say he was still proud to be an American and all that, so I was wondering just where he was headed.

"Then he says, 'I think we should give John Ashcroft a big hand...(pause)...right in the mouth!' Went on to say, 'the way things are going I'll probably be thrown in jail tomorrow for saying that, so I hope ya'll will bail me out.'"

Right on, Merle. At another concert, June a year ago , he was quoted by John Derbyshire in National Review online as saying, "Look at the past 25 years, we went downhill, and if people don't realize it, they don't have their fucking eyes on ... In 1960, when I came out of prison as an ex-convict, I had more freedom under parolee supervision than there's available to an average citizen in America right now... God almighty, what have we done to each other?"

NAME SURE LOOKS A-RAB, DON'T IT?

"About one-fourth of the individuals who have contributed to McKinney's campaigns over the past five years have names that appear to be Arab-American or Muslim, according to an informal study of Federal Election Commission records by the Journal-Constitution." Can you imagine a similar story appearing about the Jewish financial contributors to the campaign of Denise Majette, who recently defeated Cynthia McKinney in the Democratic primary in Georgia's Fourth District. The Journal-Constitution loathed McKinney.

Many liberal Democrats resolutely averted their gaze from McKinney's campaign and disdained her appeals for help, even though Majette's preference for president in 2000 was the black Republican, Alan Keyes whose prime plank was the outlawing of abortion.

DULLNESS HAILED

"'Barr, McKinney and Traficant were colorful at the expense of the institution of which they were a part,' said Thomas E. Mann, a senior fellow at the Brookings

(**OLS** *continued on page 6)*

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Hunting Commie Perverts

The Scarlet Professor

BY SUSAN DAVIS

For more than a century, political and sexual repression have been locked in a dance: two steps forward, one step away, separate twirls, then back to the embrace. The choreographers of America's war against subversion place radical politics and sexual abnormality in the spotlight. They arrange special arabesques around the nuclear family, so often threatened by mass culture, creeping sexual expressiveness, obscenity. The names of the principals are well-known: The American Legion, the Catholic Church, the FBI and the post office, with R. Mitchell Palmer, J. Edgar Hoover, Janet Reno, Edwin Meese, and John Ashcroft in supporting roles. Their individual victims are uncountable, and mostly unknown.

Frederick Newton Arvin learned this American dance by heart. Considered one of the two or three most brilliant literary critics at mid-century, Arvin was a wonderful writer, a peer of Edmund Wilson and Van Wyck Brooks, producer of ambitious biographies of Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Emerson. The winner of a National Book Award and a Guggenheim fellowship, Arvin worked outside the power centers of Harvard and Columbia. He taught at Smith, the small, prestigious women's college, where bright young scholars followed to be part of his circle.

But in 1960, Newton Arvin was caught up in the sex-politics dance: his career and life were destroyed by a police raid on his Northampton, Massachusetts apartment. When a vice squad uncovered a cache of homosexually-oriented magazines and photos, as well as his intimate diaries, the local and national press accused Arvin, along with two other Smith faculty, of running a New England-wide "smut ring". Joel Dorius and Ned Spofford, and several working-class men from Northampton were indicted along with Arvin for possession of pornography. The widespread smut conspiracy never materialized.

Barry Werth's biography, *The Scarlet Professor: A Literary Life Shattered by Scandal*, (Random House, 2001) pieces together how the literary critic's painfully closeted gay life led to the nearly-forgotten "Arvin Affair". It was national news, part of a country-wide panic over mass culture's flexible cousin "smut", especially gay smut, a category that could encompass everything from beefcake magazines to foreign films.

In Werth's account, the panic was a dying gasp of McCarthyism. Frustrated state and federal authorities, losing their red-hunting credibility, turned "perverts" and sexual print culture into the new subversive threat. Only a few years later, Werth argues, the United States would become more liberal in its attitudes toward obscenity; slowly it showed homosexuals more tolerance. The United States Supreme Court would significantly restrain police powers of search and seizure, tighten the rules on prosecutorial use of evidence , and more firmly limit police and prosecutors' power to define the obscene. Thus, the Arvin Affair marks the end of The Great Fear, and the broadening of civil liberties. Events of the last decade cast a gloomy light on this optimistic time line.

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Born in 1900, in Valparaiso, Indiana, Newton Arvin was always a child apart, sickly and lonely. He read as many as ten hours a day, straining his eyesight so that it troubled him his entire life. On the strength of scholarship alone, Arvin made it through Harvard, and began to work as a writer. Van Wyck Brooks quickly asked him to write for several of his small magazines. In those days, although it barely paid the rent, it was just possible to make a major reputation by writing brilliant book reviews. Soon, Arvin landed a job at Smith.

For reasons Werth leaves obscure, Arvin was always a man of the left. He picked up Progressive Party politics in stultifying Valparaiso, and chaired the Lafollette Club in Northampton. After the crash of 1929, Arvin wrote to his friend Granville Hicks that perhaps it really was time to take Communism seriously. And he tried, intellectually as well as politically, becoming along with Hicks one of the two most successful Marxist-influenced literary historians. Arvin and Hicks wrote an accessible, historical body of criticism. In the 1930s and 1940s, Arvin was involved in Popular Front organizations, but he found party meetings and theorizing dreary. Politics, a brittle mistaken marriage, students, even friendships came a distant third after reading and writing. But in his diaries, he never neglected to note his revulsion for mainstream American politics.

His unambiguously gay sexuality tortured Arvin. With most of the rest of his generation, he shared the contemporary perception of homosexuality as at best a character flaw, and at worst a filthy perversion. He was deeply secretive, frequently using alcohol and tranquilizers to dull the pain of self-recognition. Apparently the left groups Arvin belonged to offered cold comfort to homosexuals. Neither was Smith tolerant, despite its acceptance for both "Boston marriages", long-term, lesbian domestic pairings, and heterosexual professors who cut wide swaths among the undergraduates. This latter group notoriously included Al Fisher, former husband of the essayist M. F. K. Fisher, and Arvin's close friend. (In her memoir, *The Gastronomical Me*, M. F. K. records a year she endured in a freezing French apartment for her "beloved Al". At the end of the book she has left him to devote herself to a dying lover.

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Now we know why!)

Paradoxically, claustrophobic and gossipy Smith was a safe place for Arvin: he did not have to worry about crossing the line with male students. He did have lovers. The most famous was a very young Truman Capote, who later wrote "Newton was my Harvard". But Capote did not fit in Northampton, and Arvin didn't fit with New York celebrities. He formed alliances with other Smith and New England scholars. Publicly he was friend and adviser to some of the literary lights of the 20th century, including Edmund Wilson,Carson McCullers,W. H. Auden, with whom he shared a lover, and Sylvia Plath, who adored him.

It was in his work that Newton Arvin found he was not so alone in his love for men. Puritanism and its effect on America's 19th-century writers was the most pressing topic in all his research and criticism. He wondered how men and women live in a world with such a rigidly punitive spiritual and erotic inheritance. And how to write about the undercurrents of same-sex affection, love and lust — shaping the work of Hawthorne, Melville and not so covertly, Whitman, for a society that could barely recognize homosexual humanity? Newton Arvin was one of the first to trouble these waters.

In the middle 1950s, Arvin barely survived one of the many red scares paralyzing the country. At Smith, the inquisition was kicked off by Aloise Buckley Heath, elder sister of William F. Buckley, who accused the college of being flush with "pink" professors. Robert Gorham Davis and his Congress for Cultural Freedom followed through on campus. The faculty fought off Davis, but Arvin was terrified. It was bad enough by the 1950s to be linked to a Communist- influenced group. To be homosexual was to double the political subversion, attacking the republic through its gender and family structure.

Long after he had come into his own as a critic, Arvin began to come into his own sexually. It was odd, he wrote as he approached 60, that his sex interests instead of waning became harder to suppress. In the slightly more open post-war sexual climate, in the company of younger men, Arvin became more daring. His friends took him cruising in downtown Springfield, and they spent weekends in Manhattan visiting the famous Everard bathhouse. More dangerously, he crossed the town and gown line in Northampton, inviting strangers to visit his apartment, sometimes for sex; sometimes to look at bodybuilder photographs; probably most important, enjoying the companionship. His straight friends said they'd never seen him look better.

Newton Arvin's name was probably culled from the mailing list of the Mattachine Society's *One*, or some other "suspect publication", by a postal inspector. The local cops had been raiding public men's rooms and rousting men from parked cars for weeks, as New England shivered under the news of another vice epidemic. Then someone tipped the police that Arvin was prominent on the campus. When they searched his apartment, he fell apart, spilling the names of buddies with whom he looked at photos. Officers found his diaries, and thought they'd hit pay dirt. As news of the arrests spread, magazine bonfires filled the Connecticut River Valley with anxious smoke.

Although Arvin and his friends posed no direct threat to Smith's all female student body (certainly a less practical threat than Al Fisher's horizontal exertions), the Board of Trustees worried about "the dark connections between subversive politics and abnormal sexuality". Should a homosexual who liked to look at pictures be allowed to interpret the American literary canon to the prospective brides of America's future leaders? To make matters worse, as Arvin's case dragged on, the United States lurched into another period of terror, the Cuban missile crisis. Arvin pled guilty and Smith retired him early; he had no money, no place to live except the violated apartment. He lost his always precarious mental health. After a stay in a hospital, he pulled himself together for one good year to write an elegant study of Longfellow, and died in 1963 of cancer.

Werth's biography can be read as a piece of recovered gay history. *The Scarlet Professor* emphasizes Newton Arvin's closeted life, and the author sympathetically counts the excruciating toll in mental and physical health, although not in intellectual power, of Arvin's inability to feel and be his true self. With its echo of Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Professor* is about the disasters the regular recrudescence of American Puritanism and anti-leftism inflict on even the most protected and brilliant. What befell Newton Arvin happened in a thousand different ways to tens of thousands of others, and it continues to unfold now. In each victim's life, of course, the balance of pain is different. *The Scarlet Professor* places more emphasis on sexual than political repression, possibly because that is truer to Newton Arvin's life. But we need histories that keep an eye on both partners in the repressive tango.

Sexual and political terror have partnered so well, for so long. The Arvin Affair was only one event in a series of public and private catastrophes that began in the middle 1930s, with the modern anti-subversive investigations. It's instructive how long and repetitive this story is, now that the fear is back in a new shape, because it shows us that it never really left.

We're told there is a normal looking pervert hidden on every block. He may the a Red, he may be Muslim, he may be a college professor — we don't know who he is — but he's dangerous nonetheless. He may have violent porn cached on his hard drive, and maybe it's urging him to abduct your daughter.

Is it possible that in this season of fear one threat from within has displaced another? Or have all the threats have blurred into each other?

Any way they step it, it's an old American rhythm.

Susan Davis teaches at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign.

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Institution. 'They knew the shock value of their utterances and its capacity to attract a lot of press attention.'" These dreary sentiments came in a New York Times piece by Carl Hulse about the departure of colorful reps and senators from Congress.

Mann is one of those rent-a-quote guys the press loves. Call him up and he'll spit out a couple of sentences like a popcorn machine. In fact the those three reps were all in their separate ways testimonies to the fine judgement of their constituents in putting them in office. Even Republican Barr, defeated in a Georgia primary, spoke up on constitutional freedoms from time to time. Traficant was a fragrant symbol of citizen contempt for prosecutorial rampages.

Hulse evidently searched out quotes to buttress his thesis-of-the-day, that boisterous and turbulent behavior, not to mention principled views, are out of popular favor.

"Analysts believe," he wrote, " there could be a larger message in the muting of some Congressional voices, particularly in the case of the two Georgians, Mr. Barr and Ms. McKinney. In tense times, the analysts said, the public wants the combative rhetoric softened.

"'They liked to take strong, uncompromising stands on very controversial issues, and that is what makes them newsworthy,' said Merle Black, a political science professor at Emory University in Atlanta. 'But they just state opinions and positions rather than engaging in any kind of dialogue, and in the wake of 9/11, when we are at war, they are not viewed as solving problems.'"

Moral: submerge yourself in the gray mass of conformity, and you'll do just fine. It's all nonsense of course. The public relishes stand-up people. Look at the career of Ron Paul, the great libertarian from Texas, one of just three (another Republican plus Dennis Kucinich, a Democrat,) who recently voted against life sentences for hackers. Traficant was never abandoned by his constituents. He went down because the jury, possibly confused, voted him guilty and Congress threw him out. McKinney was the victim of a well hatched plot. She actually got more votes than in 2000.

Merle Haggard: "I think we should give Ashcroft a big hand: right in the mouth!"

National Review Puffs Into Town

In mid September of this year the National Review reported breathlessly that "two dozen" members of the Bin Laden clan had been clearance by the Feds to leave Logan airport for Saudi Arabia only days after September 11, '01. The National Review hinted that only an okay from High Places could have enabled these members of the bin Laden clan to leave the jurisdiction unimpeded.

CounterPunchers may recall that in the edition of this newsletter for September 16-30, 2001, we reported that within minutes of the attacks on 9/11, the relatives of suspected terror mastermind Osama bin Laden who were, until then, living very comfortably in the United States began scrambling for quick passage back to Saudi Arabia. Many of the bin Ladens had been roosting in Babylon West, aka Beverly Hills and Bel Air.

They swiftly realized that even in this chic environment things could get dicey for relatives of the Lion of Kandahar.

But how to get out of Dodge? All flights out of LAX were cancelled for nearly a week.

In the end, they turned to a company that specializes in flying rock bands on tour, including Neil Young and Bruce Springsteen. Apparently not all of the bin Laden brood shares the prudish Osama's violently anti-rock & roll sentiments.

Ironically, the Gulfstream III jet whisked the bin Laden women from LAX to Boston's Logan airport, the launching pad for two of the killer jets.

It seems that on the flight to Logan, the women took a particular liking to one of the younger members of the rescue crew and prevailed upon him to accompany them back to Riyadh on board a private 767 jet. No word a year later on whether he has been permitted to return to Los Angeles. CP

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Rumsfeld: America's Most Dangerous Man?

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